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Sen. Allen's amendment provides funding for Walloon Lake project

LANSING – State Sen. Jason Allen, R-Traverse City, successfully offered an amendment to House Bill 4437 reinstating funding for Bear Creek Township to acquire property on Walloon Lake.

HB 4437 provides supplemental appropriations for Fiscal Year 2005-2006.

“While there are certainly landowners in the area who do not support this parkland acquisition, public hearings were held at both the local and state level on this project,” Allen said. “After hearing from people on both sides of this issue, the local government and the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund board both decided to move forward. I commend them for making their decisions in an open and thoughtful manner.”

Bear Creek was awarded a grant from the MNRTF last December to purchase 3.3 acres for a park at Jones Landing along Walloon Lake in Emmet County, but could not proceed with plans until the funds were appropriated by the Legislature.

Allen's amendment would provide approximately \$2 million in Natural Resources Trust Fund dollars to acquire land for a township park on the lake. The trust fund provides a source of funding for the public acquisition of lands for protection and public outdoor recreation. Funds are derived from royalties on the sale and lease of state-owned mineral rights.

“It was unfortunate and unprecedented when the funding for this project was removed from the rest of the projects recommended by the trust fund board,” Allen said. “I appreciate the support of my colleagues to restore this funding so that Bear Creek Township can proceed with its plans.”

HB 4437 passed the Senate by a vote of 37-1 and will now go to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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